



The Alliance to End Homelessness

www.endhomelessnessottawa.ca

STEERING COMMITTEE

Marion Wright, *Chair*

Alliance to End Homelessness
also CEO, Canadian Mental Health Association,
Ottawa Branch

Dan Sabourin, *Vice-Chair*

Alliance to End Homelessness
also Director, Community Programs, Youth
Services Bureau

Members

Tim Aubry

Senior Researcher, Centre for Research on
Educational and Community Services University of
Ottawa

Simon Brazier

Senior Programs Manager
The Ottawa Mission

Michael Coe

Community Representative

Tony Cruickshank

Manager, Homeless Outreach Program Wabano
Centre for Aboriginal Health

Sue Garvey

Director, Cornerstone/LePilier

Mary-Martha Hale

Director, Centre 454, Anglican Social Services

Val Hinsperger

Director, Nepean Housing Corp.

Rosine Kaley

Executive Director
Action-Logement/Action-Housing

Lisa Ker

Executive Director, Ottawa Salus

Wanda MacDonald

Executive Director, Pinecrest-Queensway
Community Health Centre

Christine MacIntosh

Director of Child and Youth Services,
John Howard Society

Meg McCallum

Ottawa Social Housing Network

Terrie Meehan

Community Representative

Wendy Muckle

Executive Director, Ottawa Inner City Health

Judy Perley

Senior Director, Housing and Support Services,
National Capital Region, YMCA-YWCA Ottawa

Robin Pow

Director, Patient Care Services, Department of
Community Mental Health, Royal Ottawa Health
Care Group

Perry Rowe, *Past Chair*

Executive Director
The Salvation Army Ottawa Booth Centre

Paul Soucie

Executive Director, Shepherds of Good Hope

Ray Sullivan

Executive Director
Centertown Citizens Ottawa Corp.

Trudy Sutton

Executive Director, Housing Help

Non-voting Members

Janice Burelle (*Ex Officio*)

Administrator, Housing Services Branch
City of Ottawa

Michelle Couture (*Ex Officio*)

Labour Market and Social Development Programs
Branch, Service Canada/Human Resources and
Skill Development Canada

Marc Provost (*Ex Officio*)

Program Manager
Residential Services, City of Ottawa

ATEH Coordinator

Lynne Browne

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE April 11, 2011

Ottawa community still not on target to end homelessness in 10 years says The Alliance to End Homelessness

Report Card on Ending Homelessness in Ottawa, Jan–Dec 2010

“Despite some progress in creating additional affordable housing units last year, the Ottawa community faced challenges in meeting the 2010 targets we set to end homelessness by 2020,” says Marion Wright, Chair of the Alliance to End Homelessness (ATEH).

Last year the Alliance to End Homelessness set strong annual targets to end homelessness within the next decade, particularly for the development of new affordable housing units.

“We’re pleased that federal, provincial and municipal funding, along with the efforts of housing, shelter and service providers, resulted in some 334 new affordable units in 2010,” says Wright. “That’s a significant increase and welcome improvement over the 88 produced in 2009, but still well below our target of 1,000 new units per year. Nonetheless the community received a **“C plus” grade for creating more affordable housing** in the Report Card.”

Wright says the Alliance to End Homelessness welcomes the new direction at City Hall under the leadership of Mayor Jim Watson, which includes \$10 million for the Housing and Poverty Initiative to address homelessness and poverty, and \$4 million for capital investments in housing in the 2011 budget. The Alliance says though that it is time for the Federal – and Provincial governments – to take a cue from the City of Ottawa and step up their own investments.

“That’s why we want all candidates in the federal election to commit to quickly establishing a National Housing Strategy and to reversing the housing-related spending cuts happening in 2011,” says Wright (details below). “We are very concerned by the finding that affordable housing has become further out of reach for low-income households than it has ever been. We’re urging constituents to let politicians and candidates know they will be “voting for housing” this year and that targeted spending can make a difference in ending homelessness.”

The Report Card gave its first “F” grade for housing affordability, which aims at reaching Canada’s affordability standard where people on low incomes would be able to spend no more than 30% of their income on housing. **In 2010, housing in Ottawa became less affordable in two of our three categories.**

Shockingly, according to the Report Card, a single person on Ontario Works would need **121% of the income rate** set by the provincial government to rent a bachelor apartment; clearly an impossible situation! A single person living on a disability pension needs to spend 69% of their income to rent a bachelor apartment in Ottawa. For a person earning minimum wage, the increase in the minimum wage rate slightly reduced the percentage spent on rent from 45% to 44%.

Length of shelter stay received a grade of “D minus”. Wright says she is also alarmed that the length of the average shelter stay has worsened to a stay of 62 days in 2010 for both families and individuals. “Though the average stay of youth in

shelters was close to our target of 30 days, the length of stay has worsened for families, single women and single men, so we're actually going backwards for the majority of homeless people." The ATEH's target is to reduce shelter stays by three days per year to an average 30 days by 2020.

Most distressing is that the average stay for families with children was 72 days, a whopping increase of nine days. **"There were 1,408 homeless children last year,"** says Wright. "Ottawa families are now spending more than two months in emergency shelter before finding housing. This is totally unacceptable. The impact of such long stays on children and their parents is very troubling."

The Report Card also states the **number of homeless individuals received a "C" grade as 7,156 people stayed in an emergency shelter in 2010**, only a slight decrease from the previous year. ATEH targets set last year aim to decrease the number of people using shelters by 500 per year to be down to about 2,000 by 2020.

The Report Card is produced by The Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa (ATEH), a non partisan group taking action to end homelessness, which has 75 community organizations as members. ATEH uses an annual targets table for grading which outlines definitions and change for the letter grades.

ATEH Annual Targets Table for Grading: Letter Grade, Definitions & Change				
Letter Grade	Affordable housing: new units plus rent supplements	Decrease in # of homeless people	Decrease in length of shelter stay	Affordability: % of income required for housing
A	700 – 1,000	- 500	- 3 days	30%
B	350 – 699	- 250	- 1.5 days	35%
C	200 – 349	0	0 days	40%
D	100 – 199	+ 250	+ 1.5 days	45%
F	0 – 99	+ 500	+ 3 days	50%

English & French PDFs will be posted by 10:30 am, April 11, 2011 at www.endhomelessnessottawa.ca

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MEDIA CONFERENCE to release *The Report Card on Ending Homelessness in Ottawa, Jan-Dec 2010*

Date: Monday, April 11, 2011, 10:00 a.m.

Location: Salvation Army Booth Centre, 171 George Street (at Cumberland), main floor multipurpose room

CONTACT to arrange interviews or for more information:

Lynne Browne (the Coordinator of the Alliance to End Homelessness)

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Email – lbrowne@ysb.on.ca

SPEAKERS on April 11th are:

Marion Wright Chair, Alliance to End Homelessness (ATEH)

Tim Aubry Professor and Director, Centre for Research on Educational & Community Services, University of Ottawa

Sue Garvey Director, Cornerstone Housing for Women

Tanya A woman with a personal experience of homelessness

Also available to speak with media: ATEH Steering Committee Members and an additional community spokesperson affected by homelessness

DETAILS:

1. The Alliance to End Homelessness is renewing its call for a **well-funded National Housing Strategy** that includes \$2 billion to construct new social housing units, protecting the existing 600,000 existing social

housing units, and re-investing money from expiring social housing operating agreements.

2. The Alliance also calls for a **reversal of the 2011 cuts revealed in the Federal Estimates**: 39% cut in Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation housing spending (from 3.1 billion in 2010 to \$1.9 billion in 2011); and 11% cut in the Federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy Federal spending (from \$124 million in 2010 to \$110 million in 2011).

ALSO IN THE 2010 REPORT CARD:

- *Specific messages for politicians and voters at the national, provincial and municipal levels*
- *Calgary's Plan to End Homelessness and how its approach could work in Ottawa.*
- *Canada's "hidden health emergency" – Canadians who are "vulnerably housed" face the same severe health problems as people who are homeless*
- *Deprivation "hot spots" in Ottawa and neighbourhood initiatives aimed at improving the situation*
- *New housing that works.*